Falling prices of areca nut

2918. DR. (Ms.) P. SELVIE DAS:
PROF. A. LAKSHMISAGAR:
SHRI H. K. JAVARE GOWDA:
SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the falling prices of areca nut;

(b) whether it is a fact that 65 lakhs of people are directly dependent on areca nut production;

(c) if so, the steps taken to arrest the fall of areca nut price; and

(d) whether Government propose to extend MSP to areca nut farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (d) The prices of areca nut have shown a decline during the period 2000-2001 as compared to the year 1999-2000. However, this decline is mainly due to increase in production and area under cultivation of areca nut. the Government has taken several measures to arrest the decline in the prices of this item, these include:

(i) The import duty on areca nut has been increased from 35% to 100%.

(ii) Based on the recommendations of an expert Committee constituted to examine various issues relating to areca nut, the Government has developed an action plan for the future. It has been decided to discourage further expansion in area under the crop, as it has no alternative use other than the masticatory purpose. The expert Committee has also recommended steps to increase the productivity so as to increase the income from unit area through crop diversification in the existing arecanut plantations and the need for adopting inter-cropping and location specific crops.

(iii) A decision to launch Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) has

also been taken. MIS will be launched on a specific request from the State/Union Territory Government and the profit/losses incurred, if any, in these operations will be shared by the Central Government and the concerned State/UnionTerritory Government on 50:50 basis. Arecanut has been procured by the Government of Goa under MIS during the year 2001-2002.

Export of Natural Rubber

2919. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to increase the export of natural rubber; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) Yes; Sir. In addition to the on-going efforts to boost the export of Natural Rubber through various promotional measures, Government has recently approved a scheme for export promotion of Natural Rubber. The Scheme *inter-alia* provides for financial incentives to exporters of Natural Rubber for quality improvement, certification, packaging and transportation.

Tea Export

2920. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that tea export of the country has plummeted by 7.18 million kgs. in the first seven months of the current year in comparison to previous year;

(b) if so,the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to increase the manufacture of orthodox tea in the country keeping in view the fact that majority of tea consuming countries prefer orthodox tea to CTC tea?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI):